The Seed Sower.

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Questions.

"Io rimango in forsè,
Che il se, e il no, nel capo mi tengona."
Inferno, VIII., 109.

Shall I some day quite forget you?
Be as though I ne'er had met you?
Blinding tears and bitterest hours
Pass from mind like April showers?

Shall I one day calmly meet you?
With no fear nor trembling greet you?
Will my words be wise and ready?
Voice be firm and heart beat steady?

When our eyes meet, will no quiver
Send through every vein a shiver?
Will your smile have ceased to charm me?
Frown of yours no more alarm me?

And your voice? Shall I not tremble
When you speak? nor need dissemble
Sudden thrills of joy and sadness,
Brief return of Love's sweet madness?

Thus I question, blindly groping
For the answer,—fearing, hoping:—
"Yes" or "No?" which would content me,
Were the power of choosing lent me?

JESSIE LEETE.

In Memory of G. F. Watts.

"Let us now praise famous men."—*Ecclesiasticus.*

Among the exhibits sent this year to the Royal Academy perhaps the most remarkable is a great piece of statuary in the courtyard called "Physical Energy." It is a horse and his rider, moulded and carved on an immense scale. The horse, held in the grip of the rider's knees and just conquered by him, is a symbol of Difficulty overcome. The man having achieved this victory is not therewith content, but shading his eyes with one hand, peers into the future for the next heroic duty. The group represents the boundless energy of young manhood. I have never seen statuary so full of vitality, alert and eager. The horse and man have nothing tame, smooth and conventional about them; rough, crude, and primitive are the terms in which they have been described, but the sense of power, courage, and daring is overwhelming.

Only less remarkable than the statuary itself is the fact that the artist was in his 88th year when he gave it the finishing touch. I say "*was*," for now he is where years do not count. Old man as he was, Mr. Watts was young in heart, in hope, in conception, and in

faculty to the last. He knew nothing of the regrets of old age; there was with him no belittling of the present in comparison with the past, no despair of the future so often found among the aged. His statuary in the courtyard of the Academy, suggests his own spirit, eager, forward-looking, original, without a touch of weakness or fear.

It is impossible to mention "fear" in connection with Watts and not remember how he waged war against that grim and grisly phantom, the fear of Death, which has so long oppressed humanity. For him Death had no terrors. On the contrary, he almost loved to dwell on the coming of the "King's Messenger," and on his beneficent mission, and that without any of the usual morbidness of the subject. "The subject of Death," he once said, "has always fascinated me. At one time it used to be pictured in a stern, repulsive form. It comes, of course in a commanding manner. We have all to face Death, but it bears a dignified and peaceful aspect. My favourite thought recognises Death as the kind nurse who says, 'Now then, children, you must go to bed and wake up in the morning.'" No artist has so frequently pictured Death as Watts. Think of those allegories, "Love and Death;" "Death crowning Innocence;" "Time, Death, and Judgment;" "Sic Transit;" "The Court of Death;" "The Messenger," and in every instance Death is stately and gracious.

Watts was one of the giants of the nineteenth century, and in some respects the most commanding genius among its artists. If anyone doubts this let him go and study, first, the collection of allegorical paintings in the Tate Gallery, and then his portraits of celebrities in the National Portrait Gallery—both freely given by the artist to the nation. In originality of conception, in pure and poetic imagination, in sheer power, in penetrative vision into the great, universal things of Love, Life, Death, Pity, Parting, Grief, Vanity, Hope, there are none to equal him. In the mere technique of painting, in beauty of colouring, and in appreciation of landscape there are who excel him, but in the loftiest things he stands alone.

It is singular how men of genius visit the world in groups as it were, or as one of them puts it, "Never alone come the immortals." We think of the Elizabethan age, that splendid outburst of song, statesmanship, adventure and daring, with its Spenser, Jonson, Shakespeare; its Sidney, Raleigh, and Drake; its Bacon, Walsingham, and Burleigh;—every man's life a drama, the whole land quivering with romance, a time of audacious power and astounding thought. In like manner we think of the Victorian age, the only age in English history in which the names of heroes, artists, poets, statesmen, adventurers, inventors, rival those of Elizabeth. In the first twenty years of the nineteenth century what a group of men came to birth! Tennyson, Browning, Gladstone, Macaulay, Carlyle, Thackeray, Dickens, Ruskin, Burne-Jones, Millais, Darwin, General Gordon, any many another. It was in 1817 that Watts was born, and he ran his career side by side with these giants, painted their portraits, and outlived them all. He was one of the typical figures of the nineteenth century. What Browning was in poetry and Gladstone in statesmanship, what Gordon was in romantic adventure, and Carlyle in literature, and Darwin in science, that Watts was in art—strenuous, lofty, ethical, humanitarian. For Watts was that strange and almost unheard-of creature in the world of art, a prophet; and, moreover, a prophet of rather a rugged type. He did not believe in the widespread cant of "Art for art's sake." He thought you might as well talk of eating for eating's sake, or surgery for surgery's sake. Art is not for itself; art is for the soul, and unless it serves the soul's powers and needs of joy, beauty, truth, and aspiration, it misses the mark of its high calling. Art, as Watts conceived it, should nerve men to duty, shame the world out of its vices, purify the affections, and attune our thoughts to the God-like and the humane. He knew, as well as any æsthete, that beauty of form and colouring, without any consideration of ethics and spiritual ideals are good. But he also knew that beauty of form and colouring, allied with the thoughts that breathe, with the imaginative passion that burns for right and justice, with the moral ideals that lift the human race to higher levels of feeling, and duty, and hope, are better still. He had no sympathy with the attempt to keep art and ethics apart. He could not treat life as if it were divided into water-tight compartments.

Men were saying science had nothing to do with religion, and they made desperate attempts to confine each to a different part of the brain, and to build a wall between them. Men said art and ethics had no relation to each other. Watts could not think of life in sections. *Life is a whole,* and no one part of it can be cut off the rest. Art and ethics, science and religion, culture and conduct, creed and character, Sunday in church, Monday in business, hours in the studio, hours in the workshop, the strenuousness of duty, the joy of music, poetry, and painting—all make up one life, in which every part affects vitally every other. And, as Mr. Chesterton puts it, "In so far as Watts had this fundamental idea that art must be linked to life, and to the strength and honour of the nation, he was a thousand times more right and more broad-minded than the man who talks the jargon of 'art for art's sake alone.'" That way permits all kinds of cruelty and morbidity, and hectic nastiness both on the stage and on the easel. Not that Watts never painted pictures in which form and colouring are almost everything —witness his "Good luck to your fishing"—but that in his work as a conscious aim he must needs find in art an interpretaion of life on the one hand, and its inspiration on the other.

* * * * * * *

It was said of a great artist of the olden time that he succeeded where other men failed, because he put more goodness into his heads. This was the secret of Mr. Watts' magnificent success as a portrait painter. His portraits are not correct photographs of certain features of the face, deep-set eyes, Grecian nose, square chin, lofty forehead, and so on. He is not careful about laces and buttons, nor are his portraits studies in painting of the textures of silk and velvet. Behind the features he sought for the soul of a man, so that every portrait is also a symbol. The wonderful picture of Cardinal Manning, which dominates the great room in the National Portrait Gallery, is indeed a most admirable likeness, but it is also the Roman Catholic Church on its best side, ecclesiasticism in its most taking aspect. The portrait of Joachim needs not Joachim's name beneath it to tell all the world that here is a symbol of the genius of music. Tennyson is the very spirit of poetry. And when dealing with ordinary persons, city aldermen, etc., Watts paints them, according to Mr. Chesterton, about five times as magnificent as they appear to their friends or to themselves. Yet the portraits are wonderfully life-like, quite as fine as Mr. Sargeant's, only while the latter artist brings out all the coarseness, evil, cunning, and animalism of his sitters, Mr. Watts brings out all the possible good. For in painting, as in philosophy, he was an optimist. He saw the soul beneath whatever rough or uncouth exterior, believed in it, and in its indestructible greatness. In Hallam Tennyson's life of his father, there is a letter from Mr. Lecky, who writes—"Among your father's friends was Mr. Watts, and though your father had, I think, little real technical knowledge of art, he fully felt the charm of the great imaginative painter. He once asked Mr. Watts to describe his ideal of what a true portrait-painter should be, and he embodied the substance of Mr. Watts' reply in some of the noblest lines in the Idylls—

> As when a painter poring on a face
> Divinely, through all hindrance, finds the man
> Behind it, and so paints him that his face,
> The shape and colour of a mind and life,
> Lives for his children ever at its best.

* * * * * * *

Four things stood out prominent in Mr. Watts' character.

1. He was one who realised in his own career Wordsworth's ideal of "plain living and high thinking." There was about him a certain austere simplicity, which gave a silent but powerful rebuke to many aspects of the world in which he lived. He did not think that the supreme aim of an artist should be to make a great fortune; to build himself a fine house, a palace of art, in St. John's Wood; to have a score of carriages at his door; to receive a title. Twice Mr. Gladstone pressed on him a Baronetcy, and twice he declined. He never yielded a jot to that love of display and luxury which is the curse of so many modern artists. All his finest paintings he gave away. Having in his younger days provided himself by his labours with a modest competency for the rest of his life, he painted henceforth for the nation. He refused all the temptations of the fashionable world, determined to live his own

simple life in his own way. He hated all ostentation and self-advertisement, and like his own and Tennyson's Sir Galahad—

> His strength was as the strength of ten
> Because his heart was pure.

2. He was nobly independent, and individual. Independence, the passion to be himself and not a copy, to speak his own word and not another's, was fundamental in the make of his mind. He could not work on other men's ideas; much as he admired and loved Tennyson he could never bring himself to illustrate his poems. He felt for one thing that he could not do justice to another man's thoughts. Himself a great and imaginative thinker he had no need to borrow ideas, subjects, inspiration from without. His great allegorical pictures are entirely his own; he discards all the conventional symbols of the allegory, the cross, the scythe, the hour glass, the *shield* of faith, the *anchor* of hope—things of which our church windows have made us so weary—and invents a new and striking symbolism of his own. In every picture he strikes an original note.

3. He was broadly humanitarian. Although he knew little or nothing of Political Economy all his sympathies ran to Socialism. The life, the sorrows, the wrongs, the sins of the people, their virtues often gleaming like gold in the mire, were always with him. He dwelt not on the subtleties of civilisation, but on the great, deep, primitive, universal things of human life, love of children, manly effort, the profound things of grief, parting and pity, the joy of labour, the everlasting things of the common human heart. His picture, *The Seamstress*, is as pathetic as Tom Hood's *Song of the Shirt*. "The Happy Warrior," "Physical Energy," "Love and Life," "Mammon," need no interpretation. Men of every clime and every tongue are spoken to in a language understood of them all. One of his most cherished ideas was a plan for preserving in the memories of men, the names of heroes in humble life, policemen, firemen, colliers, nurses and others, who had sacrificed themselves at the call of duty or humanity. He pleaded for the construction of open-air galleries to commemorate and honour the brave and good and kind in lowly station. The soldier never misses his glory, but the man or woman who in daily life faces death for a fellow-creature oftentimes passes away unrecognised and unwept. His idea was to use public parks and gardens, and there on walls, suitably protected, inscribe the names of those who thus fell in the fight. He lived to see a start made in one of the London parks, where four tablets record the self-sacrificing deaths of a fitter's labourer, an engine-driver, a ship's stewardess, and a police-constable.

4. The catholicity of his religious faith and idealism. Dogmas had no power over him; no Church could claim him for its own; yet no man of the nineteenth century better illustrated the Beatitudes of Jesus than Mr. Watts. His pictures are chapters in a new Bible, but they are not for a sect. "I teach great truths," he said, "but I do not dogmatise. On the contrary, I purposely avoid all reference to creeds, and appeal to men of all ages and every faith. I lead them to the church door, and then they can go in and see God in their own way." He conceived of art as doing for religion what Isaiah and Micah had done. In a letter to a friend he writes, "I even think that in the future, and in stronger hands than mine, art may yet speak as great poetry itself, with the solemn and majestic ring in which the Hebrew prophets spoke to the Jews of old, demanding noble aspirations, condemning in the most trenchant manner prevalent vices, and warning in deep tones against lapses from morals and duties."

From the beginning to the end Watts kept the spiritual, the ideal temper. He believed in what men call the impracticable and the impossible. In youth he saw visions, in old age he dreamed dreams. Faith in the invisible things of the soul, in noble ideals, in possibilities of good for the world of which the world only makes a mocking—to these things Watts was ever loyal. Never did he cease to obey the call of Merlin to the young mariners of Tennyson's fine poem, "Follow the gleam." In early manhood he heard that call; in old age he sounded it forth himself for the next generation.

> There on the border
> Of boundless ocean,
> And all but in heaven,
> Hovers the gleam.

Not of the sunlight,
Not of the moonlight,
Not of the starlight,

O, young mariner,
Down to the haven
Call your companions;
Launch your vessel,
And crowd your canvas;
And ere it vanishes
Over the margin
After it, follow it,
Follow the gleam!

JOSEPH WOOD.

"How Hot it has been!" *

That remark has probably been spoken about thirty million times in London during the last week. Let any one enter a shop, where a civil master interchanges a few pleasant words with his customers on the conclusion of their purchases, and if he fail to do justice to our calculation, by multiplying the three million of speakers by ten repetitions of the speech apiece, we shall be surprised. And it is a sagacious observation, too. Let foreigners laugh at us for always talking about the weather. After all, it is as good a preliminary little trot before conversation breaks into a steady-paced gallop, as any other that can be suggested.

It has been often said that to enjoy a visit to a hot country we should not go thither, as most wiseacres do, in winter, but in summer; and, *vice versâ*, that we should visit St. Petersburg in January to know how comfortable winter may be made. Certainly, the intelligent southerner who should come to London in July, although he will find it in all the roar and glory of the "season," will hardly think we have prepared ourselves judiciously for the very moderate temperature, as he would consider it, of our hottest days. We can imagine one of them, let us say the poor, cheated gentleman from Rangoon, mentioned at the Cab Reform meeting. "These islanders," he would write, "are ignorant of many of the elements of civilisation, although they have attained to surprising perfection in the art of whirling about from place to place with rapidity. I sought, on my arrival in their chief city, for a cool palanquin, or an elephant, in whose howdah I might be conveyed to a caravanserai, but was told I had no option but that between a small perilous open machine called 'a 'ansom' (whatever that may mean in their tongue), and a square and very ill-smelling box upon wheels. Entering the latter, as the least undignified, I was jolted about fifty paces, and then set down and requested to pay two rupees and a half, or, in English money, five shillings. I demurred, but was obliged to yield, lest the curses of the driver might, for all I knew, in this mysterious country have power, as he seemed to be assured, over my 'eyes;' though what he had to do with them I was unable to guess. Entering the house appointed for me, I instantly felt stifled by the smell of what must have been a huge mass of roasting flesh of that sacred animal, the cow; too constantly eaten, as you are aware, by these infidels. No stone-floored or vaulted hall, no marble stair, no matted room with cool *punkah* waving before the window, and large soft divan against the wall, greeted my wearied and anxious gaze. Nor could they be obtained, I was informed, in London, for all the gold in my pouch. Instead of these, in the close unwholesome heat, and with the air charged with that horrid odour of roasting cow, I was shewn up a narrow carpeted staircase into rooms choked up with furniture, and hung with fusty curtains and carpets, when the breath failed in my body. Everything was close, and hot, and dusty, and musty, and smoky, and pokey; nor was there, with twenty contrivances to keep oneself warm, a single device for keeping oneself cool. And these men are the conquerors of the world — the lords of India! Allah is great! There is no accounting for anything in this land of contradictions."

Why should we not do something to make our finest season more enjoyable, as well as our dreariest season less suffering? Hitherto all English ingenuity has been spent on comfort for the cold, and we have persistently ignored summer, as if we had cut it, like the old eleven days, out of the Calendar. Rich and poor, we have done alike. Stately drawing room, modest parlour, and snug kitchen, all have been furnished with the notion that the visitor should say on entrance, "Oh, how warm and comfortable!" Now, as Mr. Tupper would say,

"Christmas is a season of the year;
It arriveth once in a twelvemonth,"

* Reprinted by permission of the authoress.

and it is well to be provided for it. But July also arriveth with the same periodicity, and it appeareth not wherefore we should not likewise be prepared for it as for the festival of the Yule log and plum-pudding. Why, for instance, should at least nine houses out of ten have no ventilators for their rooms? Why are common English windows made on what the French call the guillotine principle—to seem ready to chop off the head which ventures to protrude itself under them—instead of opening like doors to admit a full current of air? Why have we outside shutters against the noon-day sun in scarcely one of the houses in London? But there is no end to the architectural defects of our thin-walled and shadeless abodes, and few of us are rich enough to mend them. Let us turn to a more hopeful side of the subject—that of furniture.

In the first place, we ought unanimously to "disestablish" those carpets which cover an entire room and are nailed down into every corner. A mat or parqueterie floor, or those stained and polished boards, at once cheap, clean, and pretty, are infinitely preferable, with a carpet laid in the middle in winter, and taken away in the heat of summer. Over such a mat or polished floor fresh water may be sprinkled whenever the heat becomes excessive, and if a little vinegar or eau-de-cologne be added, the cooling effect is marvellous. Again, our curtains—what monstrous things are those hanging yards on yards of dust-traps and heat-catchers, suspended from ceiling to floor in nearly every room in London! Green Venetian blinds—Venetian *shutters* are far better—are the exceptional luxuries; these wretched vulgar curtains, usually of blood-coloured moreen, are actually the rule in the common sort of dwelling-rooms. We have a superfluity of everything we do not want, while we lack nearly every requisite, however cheap and simple, for freshness and cleanliness.

A French gentleman of fortune not many years ago was apparently dying of atrophy. A new physician was sent for when he had reached the stage of being unable to swallow food. The doctor—he was Eugene Sue's father—arrived and found him lying half senseless in a splendid bedroom, velvet-piled carpet on the floor, silken hangings on bed and windows, and the atmosphere redolent of the perfumes of the dressing table. "Take off those bed-curtains," said Dr. Sue. "Pull down those window hangings. Carry off this carpet and all those bottles, and leave one table and a chair in the room. Now strew the floor with heather, and make a shade for the windows with branches of fir trees. Do all this, and then give M. le Marquis a little new milk to drink, and nothing else." The order was followed, and M. le Marquis lived many years to bless his doctor. We cannot all strew our floors with heath and decorate our walls with pine trees, but we can most of us clear away a vast quantity of heating, unwholesome, useless furniture, and use the natural means of cooling our rooms, such as all southern nations employ. What English housewife ever dreams of hanging a piece of mat, or a railway rug, or old carpet steeped in water, across the window wherein the sun shines hottest? Yet this cheap and simple device is sufficient to lower the temperature of any room half a dozen degrees.

We are persuaded that if the good women who are at this season looking out to make their annual harvest by letting their rooms to us poor town-sick Londoners, longing for fresh air or a breath of sea-brine, would take our hints to heart, and clear off their moreen curtains and gaudy carpets—substituting mats and Venetian shutters, and furniture chintz-covered, and moderate in proportion to their rooms—they would find that the lodgers who once had inhabited their cool apartments would never spend another July and August in chambers decorated as if England at that season were in the frozen zone.

FRANCES POWER COBBE.

Life for Others, Life in God.

Men are for the most part content with themselves if they abstain from evil and do a little good in the world. They never consider, or hardly ever, how their whole lives might be given up to the service of God and their fellow-creatures. They are the creatures of habit and repute; they do not depart from the customary ways of society. Nor can we deny that most of us would be unequal to this greater life, nor set any limit to the good which may

be done by those who sit still in the house, who scarcely ever leave the seclusion of their own village or home. But let us not be ignorant also that there is a higher and nobler ideal than this—the ideal of a life which is passed in doing good to man; in seeking to alleviate the miseries and inequalities of his lot, to raise him out of the moral and physical degradation in which he is sunk, and to implant in him a higher sense of truth and right. What would have become of the world if there had been no such teachers or saviours of mankind? For the lower are inspired by the higher, and most of all by the highest of all. That is what makes the life of Christ such a precious possession to the world, not merely the good that He did when on earth, in teaching and consoling the afflicted, but the example which He left behind for all time of another and higher sort of character such as had never existed before in this world. To live for others only, and only in the service of God, to be the mediator between God and man, to reconcile the world to itself—this is the idea which Christ is always setting before us, and of which those who are His disciples must in their measure seek to partake. . . .

To this simple life Christ invites us; to return to the beginning of Christianity, now that the world has got so far onward in its course. He speaks to us across the ages still, telling us to come back to the first principles of religion. And of this simple religion we have the assurance in ourselves, and the better we become the more assured we are of it. Who can doubt that love is better than hatred, truth than falsehood, righteousness than unrighteousness, holiness than impurity? Whatever uncertainty there may be about the early history of Christianity, there is no uncertainty about the Christian life. Questions of criticism have been raised concerning the Gospels; there have been disputes about rites and ceremonies; whole systems of theology have passed away: but that which truly constitutes religion, that in which good men are like one another, that in which they chiefly resemble Christ, remains the same. And it may be regarded as one of the great blessings of the age in which we live that, after so many wanderings out of the way, we are at length beginning to distinguish the essential from the accidental, and to appreciate more than any former age the true meaning of the words of Christ. . . .

The highest and best that we can conceive, whether revealed to us in the person of Christ or in any other, *that* is God. Because this is relative to our minds, and therefore necessarily imperfect, we must not cast it away from us, or seek for some other unknown truth which can be described only by negatives. To such a temper the words of the Prophet may be applied: "Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? or, Who shall descend into the deep? But the word is very nigh unto thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart." Every good thought in our own mind, every good man whom we meet, or of whom we read in former ages, every great word or action, is a witness to us of the nature of God.

B. JOWETT.

Two Sonnets on Pictures by G. F. Watts.

I.

LOVE AND DEATH.

If Love be mighty to impel the stars,
—Ah me! can this be Love on which I gaze?
This piteous boy, his blue eyes all amaze
At cruel wrong, his outstretched arm that bars
His dear home's threshold—effort vain that mars
His rainbow wings—all powerless to evade
The entrance of that silent, shrouded shade,
Whose step relentless presses on, nor spares
The flowers, whose petals on the threshold lie,
The tender flowers, that Love's dear home entwined?
Ah! could he speak, yon shrouded mystery,
With grave, bent head, perchance might say, "Love's eye
Of blue eterne, with burning tears is blind,
Else could he see, the face of Death is kind."

II.

HOPE.

Look up, ye weary-hearted, spent with sighs;
Say not, "all's dark" while one fair spirit here
Keeps loyal vigil o'er your shadowed sphere.
And yet not vigil—blindfold are her eyes;
She sees not yet the end of miseries,
That, rising like harsh discords from beneath,
Have riven the lyre her faithful arms enwreath.
—For from that sphere ascend no harmonies,
Ah no! but moaning on its single string
Like midnight wind, one note of anguish frets
Her lyre, and yet she smiles while bending low,
A sweet, worn smile, wafted from far-off springs.
"Sweet note" she seems to murmur, "Well I know
Thou chim'st with that one star which never sets."

DOROTHEA HOLLINS.

Rough Notes of a Visit to G. F. Watts, at Limnerslease.

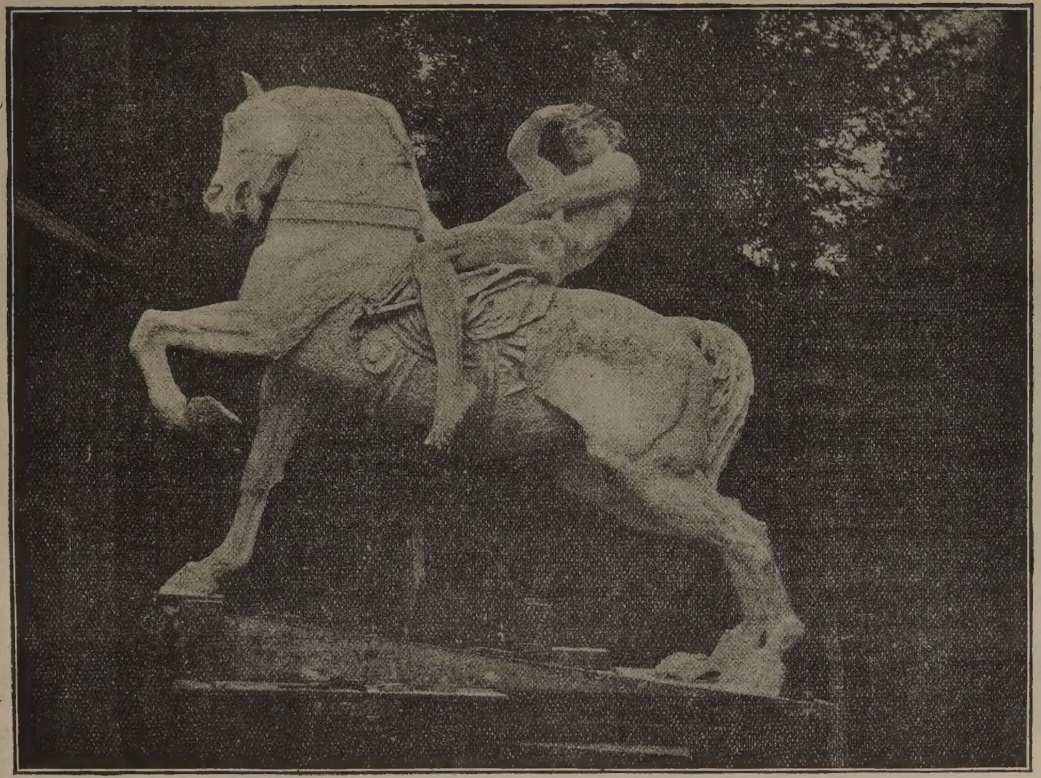
FEBRUARY 26TH, 1901.

A low, grey, beamed house, with lattice windows, amidst Scotch firs and beech woods. Low, restful rooms, everywhere bowls of flowers,* Watts in a long, loose, tawny coat, with mourning band on the arm, and the little black skull cap. He took both my hands and held them, and so led me into the studio. Such warm, outgoing friendliness—the whole person of the old man one desire to help and bless. He is eighty-four, and still apologises for being "lazy," his wife told us, because the doctor had ordered him to lie down half-an-hour in the day.

In the studio were "Love and Death," "Love and Life," "The Court of Death," "The Slumber of the Ages"—a noble, calm, although weary, figure of a woman sitting with a babe in her lap; "The Spirit of Rest," and several beautiful studies of little naked children. He began to talk very simply about all the pictures—told me that "Love and Death" was just going to Australia—"they want it there;" "The Slumber of the Ages" was the eternally old with the eternally new in her lap, "The Court of Death" was going to the Tate Gallery. "I always paint Death as a female figure, because I don't want to associate it with the bones and scythe and hour-glass." "The Spirit of Rest" is a mighty figure, in deep shadow, laying its hand on a haggard form, whether of man or woman one cannot tell, lying on a couch, with many symbols of arts and trades near it—a carpenter's hammer, a lute, etc. He explained to me that after having gone the round of human sciences and labours and found them unsatisfying, at last came Rest with its touch of infinite healing. The three (Mrs. Watts, Mrs. Fitzroy, and he) then fell into talk about the war, which I did not follow much, as I was looking at the dear pictures, and my eyes were full of tears at the beauty of it all, the noble old life, now growing frail, the ceaseless idealism of a life-long aim.

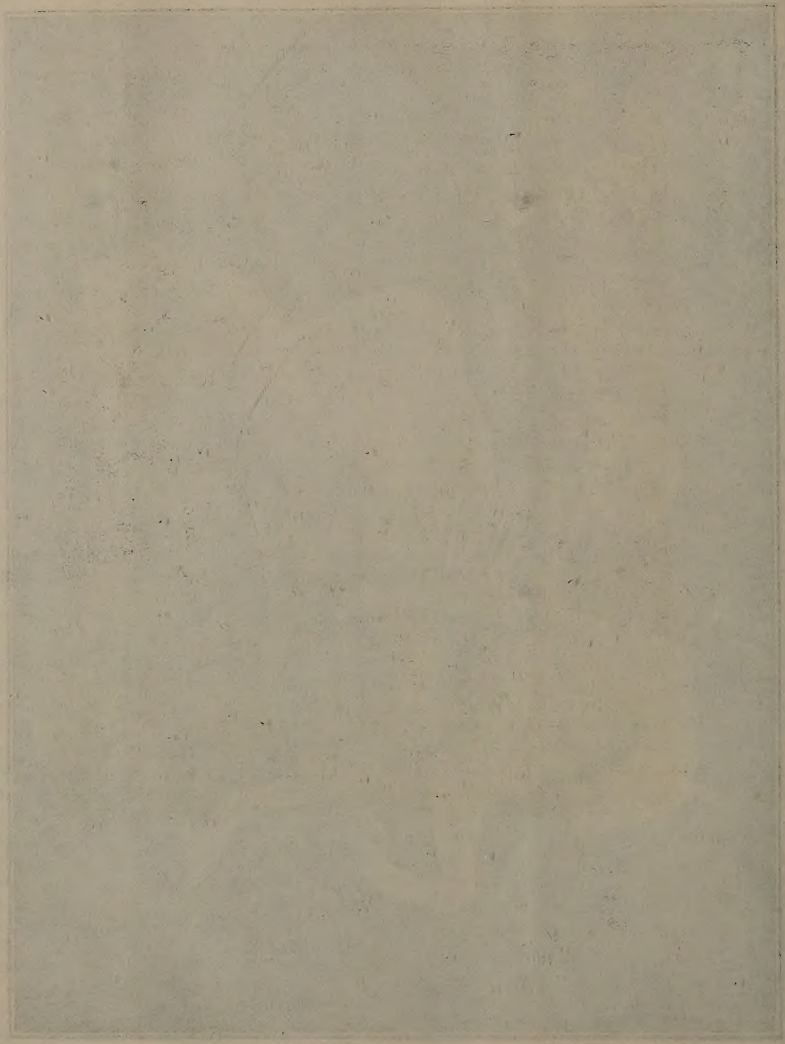
We then went into the hall again, and Mrs. Watts carried Mrs. F. off upstairs while she put on her things. I sat on a stool, and the old man in a deep chair, holding my hand so kindly as he talked about many things. He asked about my poetry; said he wished *he* could express himself in that way. He did not really think about pictures much; there were always so many things in his mind that he wished he could help in. (Here is the secret of his power—Life has as strong an interest for him as Art). I asked if he happened to remember a story I once impertinently sent him thinking it might suggest a picture. He asked me to describe the plot, and then said "Yes, that's in the direction of modern thought. But I somehow never have been able to work out ideas from books or poems—only my own." I said that was no wonder, because his ideas were truly original. He said (*à propos* of the idea I had described to him in my story) that he believed the Twentieth Century would be chiefly concerned with the development of Religion. We wanted more union. It was strange how few people had heard about the "Parliament of Religions" at Chicago, to which representatives of all sects and faiths went—Buddhist, Mahomedan, Parsee, etc., as well as Christian, and the conclusion of it was that they all agreed to accept the Lord's Prayer as a common confession of faith. "What more did we want?" he asked, and then went on to say how much he liked Pope's "Universal Prayer," and that Carlyle had said to him that "we couldn't get any further than that." But he did not see why people should not have their own forms of worship. If an elaborate service, with candles and vestments, made some people feel more devout, let them have it. "What we want is a little more charity," he said, leaning back. I told him how I had been staying with a friend who believed that much depended on our turning our attention to the subject of *Meaning*—understanding better what others mean and what we mean ourselves. He listened and seemed interested, then said, "It's nice to see people who care for serious ideas—something beyond putting on smart clothes and amusing oneself. I see many nice people here—in fact, I see none but nice people." Then he went on to say that one of the subjects often in his mind was the harm done to all classes by gambling and betting. He did not mind sport such as fox-hunting and deer-stalking, which brought out many good qualities of endurance and manliness, but he hated racing, for it demoralised the whole community, and working men wasted their savings in bet-

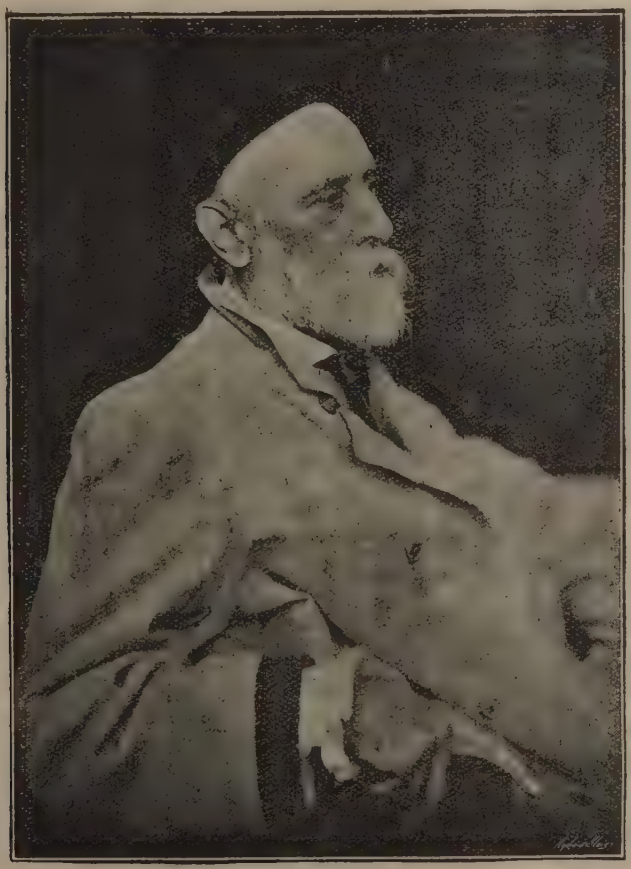
*Watts's 84th birthday was just past.



"PHYSICAL ENERGY." [G. F. WATTS, R.A.

(By permission from Photograph by F. HOLLYER, *Kensington. The block kindly lent by the Sunday School Association).*





G. F. WATTS, R A.

(By permission from Photograph by F. Hollyer, *Kensington.)*

ting. "Try to write about the Turf," he said, very earnestly, at which I smiled a little, for it did not seem quite in my line. I mentioned the Duke of Portland, as perhaps a better example of the racing man, and he said, "The Duke of Portland? Well, I'll tell you something. Some years ago I wrote to ask him to subscribe to the Home Arts Society, and he answered that 'he did not see his way to it.' See his way to it!—to giving some healthy and rational employment to the working classes, when he spends thousands on his stables! I was disgusted." I said I was surprised at this, as the Duke was usually generous and good-natured. At this point, Mrs. Watts and Mrs. F. came in, and I went with them to see the church, muffled in a long green Irish cloak of Mrs. Watts's, for it was raining hard. We

went down through their fir-wood and out on to the road, passing the little red-brick Basilica (mortuary chapel), which, to my disappointment, Mrs. Watts said it was too dark to go and see. She said they leave it open all day, in the hope that the village people will get into the habit of going and resting there, so that they won't associate it with death merely. It has all been built and decorated by the people themselves, under the Watts' guidance, and "Signor* is giving them a beautiful picture for it," she told us. (Did she say "The Spirit of Rest?" I can't remember, but it seems likely). The old church is unique in possessing *two* chancels, one of them dating from Edward the Confessor; but except for that, there was not much of an interesting sort, and we did not stay long. Coming back, we went into the clay-modelling studio, which is part of the house. Here were a nice Scotch workman from Ayrshire, a boy, and an old man, all engaged on modelling a Victorian sun-dial for the Glasgow Exhibition. Mrs. Watts has designed it. It is to have the "orb" upheld by the four Patron Saints of Great Britain, and a beautiful pedestal. We also saw a clay model of the Basilica, which Mrs. Watts had designed and made herself. She told us, too, about the statue of Tennyson, 11 feet high, which he is now working at, and which is going to Lincoln. Then she took us into another studio, where there was a portrait of King Edward, done some years ago, and not at all in Watts' usual style. There was a lovely "impression" of Mary Anderson in Greek dress beside it. We then looked into the dining-room, where there was a broad window-ledge coming out into the room, with dark red and white cyclamen in pots three rows deep, and the table had a beautiful heap of oranges and bananas in a brass dish. Then Mrs. Watts gave us tea, over which we could only spend a few minutes, and during this Watts talked to Mrs. Fitzroy about the Queen, the Princess Christian, etc. When we were going, I felt much touched and honoured that he took my face in his hands and kissed me. It is impossible to describe the atmosphere of goodwill and kindness and large-mindedness which goes out from him; though so frail-looking now and a little deaf, one would never think of him as old, so fresh and young is he in enthusiasm, and so completely does he seem to live above all thought of physical infirmity. He looked through the window and waved to us as we drove away, and looking back at the grey, gabled house among the fir trees, with flowers in every window, it was pleasant to think of him passing the evening of his days amidst such perfect peace and beauty.

*Her name for him and that under which his friends usually spoke of him.

Correspondence.

THE LATE MR. G. F. WATTS, R.A. TWO SUGGESTIONS.

To the Editor of *The Seed Sower.*

Sir,—Now that the great man and artist who has lately passed away is so much in everyone's thoughts it may perhaps be worth while to make the following suggestions, the first of which occurs to me as the result of an interview which I was privileged to have with Mr. Watts in 1901, the second as a sequel to an interesting notice in the *Daily Graphic*, speaking of the artist's wish to arrange his pictures in a kind of "House of Life."

During my visit to Limnerslease, where I was received with that outgoing friendliness, simplicity, and desire to bless which were such beautiful characteristics of his old age, he spoke a little of his pictures (more especially of his desire to divest the great figure of Death of its terrors) but more of the actual world, which he said was oftener in his thoughts. Of all the evils of the present day, none seemed to distress him more than the love of gambling and betting, spreading from high to low. Never shall I forget the true concern with which he spoke of the way in which example spread from the idle to the working classes, and of the *ruin* the habit worked among these. "There is nothing I think of more," he said; and he urged me to write a book dealing with "the turf" and the havoc it worked among those who could ill afford to lose their earnings—a task for which I felt I had no knowledge. Wider reaching, however, in its influence than a book, might be a league of those men and women whose example counts for much — those known as "leaders of society," among whom Mr. Watts numbered so many friends. Might not some who cared for his work and his convictions feel this the right moment in which to form an "Anti-gambling League," which should exclude Racing, "Bridge," and all games played for money? Is this a Counsel of Perfection, or are there not many who would welcome the chance of directing the national life into those purer channels which were ever in the heart of him who dreamt dreams and saw visions of a nobler humanity than ours?

The second suggestion concerns, in the words of *The Daily Graphic*, the idea of a "'House of Life' which might typify human existence, which in its very passages should symbolise its straight and its tortuous ways; where, at proper intervals, his pictures should be placed to warn, to encourage, to uplift along life's path . . . . . the various pictures of Death in the penultimate chamber, and, perhaps, 'The Triumph of Love'—the final victory

over Death—together constituting a message of comfort and help."

Could not this idea now be realized, with the certainty that it would have won the approval of the artist, since "from his early middle age" (we are told by some paper) it was his ambition to carry it out?

It is probable that, with his customary generosity, he has left more of his pictures to the nation, and, with those that are in the Tate Gallery, might not a collection be formed and a suitable building erected either in the East End of London or at a convenient distance outside London, to which workers could repair on holidays for the "message of comfort and help" which it would bring?

If, in addition, music of the right character to illustrate or comment on the pictures could be added, the message might still be more effectual, and catalogues might be supplied in which carefully-chosen passages from the Bible and from the great poets should harmonize with the subjects of the picture and the spirit of the music. Then, on some public holiday, such as Easter or Whitsuntide, imagine the "House oi Life" thrown open, parties of people passing through from room to room in silence, the noblest music and words wedded to the noble ideas of the artist—the music repeated five or six times daily—would not such a holiday be a true "holy-day" to the tired spirits, and such as the spirit of him whose righteousness has now, like that of his own "Happy Warrior," received the Kiss of Peace, could not fail to rejoice in?

Yours, etc.,

DOROTHEA HOLLINS.

("Theophila North.")

Notes and Jottings.

The death of Watts is in a very real sense the most important event for Englishmen during the past month. While he was alive and at work the age of the great idealists was still with us. Now that we have to speak of his completed task we are able to realise how magnificent it was in conception and how far its influence reached. Dedicated as he was to art, Watts, like Wordsworth, was content to be a teacher, and in teaching he found his vocation. His pictures are the language of morality, the symbol of the deeper meaning of life, a revelation of the elemental forces of good and evil as they struggle for mastery in the world. Even his portraits are always an interpretation of the ideal meanings of the soul, not a mere copy of a human face.

Apart from his genius as an artist, there is nothing more striking about Watts than his simple devotion to the public good. There has been nothing to surpass it in our time. His gifts of pictures to the nation are princely in their magnificence, only the word seems a little out of place where everything was so earnest and simple. It touched everything he did with chivalric nobleness. It kept the ideal of knightly service before men, and stirred them to reverence and worship. Even when they are least willing to go and do likewise, they cannot call him foolish or regard him as mistaken. Some things, like the Cross, are above criticism. They have an absolute value.

Perhaps nothing more stimulating and suggestive has been written about Watts than the little monograph by G. K. Chesterton. It goes without saying that it rejoices in paradox, but it is full also of real insight into the significance of great didactic art. We believe that we are right in saying that Mr. Chesterton had an art training, and so speaks with technical knowledge. We have seldom seen the subject of allegorical painting treated better. It is a common mistake to suppose that it can be interpreted in words at all. It is in reality another form of language which conveys its meaning and suggestion directly to the mind. "Two men," he says, "felt a swift, violent, invisible thing in the world: One said the word 'Hope,' the other painted a picture in blue and green paint. The picture is inadequate; the word 'Hope' is inadequate; but between them, like two angles in the calculation of a distance, they almost locate a mystery, a mystery that for hundreds of ages has been hunted by men and evaded them." The bearing of a passage like this upon the use of religious language is worthy of consideration. The great words of religion can never be more than symbols. We must recognise their inadequacy. We must interpret them imaginatively and in the light of a varied human experience.

It seems a long step from the great artist to the Salvation Army; but in reality there is more kinship than appears on the surface. They have both dealt earnestly with the primitive emotions of human nature. The great gatherings in London have been a remarkable testimony to the world-wide spiritual influence of the Army. The days of laughter and scorn are past, and success has come in a

full flood. There is even some danger that in the light of royal favour it may become fashionable. We hope that it may be saved from this nemesis of successful religion. Its strength hitherto has lain in its passionate love of souls, its sympathy with common life, and its superb indifference to religious conventionality.

The Licensing Bill has pursued its ill-fated course through the House of Commons. The country is indignant, but its indignation has just stopped short of real effectiveness; and so the Government has yielded to the pressure of the brewers and left the angry democracy out of its calculations. Certainly there is no excuse for blindness as to the motives of those who stand to gain most by the Bill. The Archbishop of Canterbury said recently that he and his episcopal brethren were receiving daily letters from the brewing interest, stating that the Church being hostile to them, they would divert their subscriptions to the Liberation Society. "Our trade our politics" could not be expressed in a more shameless way. The distressing thing is that so many people, engrossed in sport and money-making, seem to care for none of these things. The party-machine has broken down completely as an organ for expressing the higher mind of the nation. More and more the hopes of serious people are fixed upon the introduction into the House of Commons of men drawn from the ranks of labour, uncorrupted by the greed of wealth and capable of being fired by great enthusiasms.

Is Precocity a Sign of Disease?

One of the best of Lord Beaconsfield's many flashes of light on history is his account, in "Coningsby," of the great men who have also been very young:—"'For life in general there is but one decree. Youth is a blunder; Manhood a struggle; old Age a regret. Do not suppose,' he added, smiling, 'that I hold that youth is genius; all that I say is, that genius, when young, is divine. Why, the greatest captains of ancient and modern times both conquered Italy at five-and-twenty! Youth, extreme youth, overthrew the Persian Empire. Don John of Austria won Lepanto at twenty-five—the greatest battle of modern time; had it not been for the jealousy of Philip, the next year he would have been Emperor of Mauritania. Gaston de Foix was only twenty-two when he stood a victor on the plain of Ravenna. Everyone remembers Condé and Rocroy at the same age. Gustavus Adolphus died at thirty-eight. Look at his captains: that wonderful Duke of Weimar, only thirty-six when he died. Banier himself, after all his miracles, died at forty-five. Cortes was little more than thirty when he gazed upon the golden cupolas of Mexico. When Maurice of Saxony died at thirty-two, all Europe acknowledged the loss of the greatest captain and the profoundest statesman of the age. Then there is Nelson, Clive—but these are warriors, and perhaps you may think there are greater things than war. I do not: I worship the Lord of Hosts. But take the most illustrious achievements of civil prudence. Innocent III., the greatest of the Popes, was the despot of Christendom at thirty-seven. John de Medici was a cardinal at fifteen, and, according to Guicciardini, he baffled with his statecraft Ferdinand of Arragon himself. He was Pope, as Leo X., at thirty-seven. Luther robbed even him of his richest province at thirty-five. Take Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley, they worked with young brains. Ignatius was only thirty when he made his pilgrimage and wrote the "Spiritual Exercises." Pascal wrote a great work at sixteen, and died at thirty-seven—the greatest of Frenchmen. Ah! that fatal thirty-seven, which reminds me of Byron, greater even as a man than a writer. Was it experience that guided the pencil of Raphael when he painted the palaces of Rome? He, too, died at thirty-seven. Richelieu was Secretary of State at thirty-one. Well then, there was Bolingbroke and Pitt, both Ministers before other men left off cricket. Grotius was in great practice at seventeen, and Attorney-General at twenty-four. And Acquaviva—Acquaviva was General of the Jesuits, ruled every Cabinet in Europe, and colonised America before he was thirty-seven. What a career!'" Mr. James Sully conceiving a very similar thought, subjected it to the test of statistical inquiry, and found it to be in the main true. In a very curious article he adduced

evidence which seems to establish not only that precocity is not necessarily a sign of disease, but that exceptional capacity, especially if it is of the original kind which comes within the scope of the word "genius," is very apt to be precocious. He shows that out of 287 great musicians, artists, scholars, poets, novelists, men of science, and philosophers, 231, or four fifths, were precocious children, giving signs of their unusual capacity in their special line of thought long before they were twenty; indeed, in some cases before they had emerged from comparative infancy. Mozart was exhibited as a pianist before he was five, and Mendelssohn's first cantata was written at eleven; while Beethoven, at nine, had outgrown his father's musical teaching; Raphael was a scholar in the studio at twelve; Titian painted a Madonna at the same age; Morland was an accepted portrait painter, highly paid by his customers, at ten; Landseer exhibited his pictures at thirteen; and Flaxman carved busts at fifteen. Golcondi, at eight, sketched out a comedy; Calderon wrote a play at fourteen; Goethe was a poet at fifteen; Beaumont composed tragedies at twelve; and Cowley's epic written at ten, is said to be "an astonishing feat of imaginative precocity." Scott invented stories at twelve; Dickens was a charming *raconteur*, the delight of his companions, at nine; and Charlotte Brontë wrote stories, as well as poems and plays, at fourteen. Grotius was a scholar at twelve; Porson could repeat the whole of Horace and Virgil before he was fifteen; and Macaulay at eight put together a compendium of universal history. Newton was a mechanician at school; Laplace, while a mere lad, was a mathematical teacher; Pascal at eighteen invented a calculating machine; and Leibnitz thought out difficult philosophic problems before he was fifteen. These are mere selections from much longer lists; and as in many cases the capacity must have appeared and have escaped either notice or record, we may take it that with men of genius, precocity, sometimes of the most unusual, and occasionally of an almost miraculous kind, has been a rule. Of course, the rule is not invariable, and, of course, also, it is most frequently observed in those departments of thought in which, as in music and in painting, a certain inherent aptitude of the senses is necessary as a condition. Not only a brain, but a finger is necessary to the great musical executant; and Raphael must not only have a gifted mind, but exceptionally percipient eyes. Young philosophers are scarcer than young musicians, and there have been many boy-painters for one boy distinguished in any science except mathematics, which seems, like arithmetic, to have some unknown relation to particular brains, calculating-boys working out their results, it seems almost proved, by unconscious methods. At all events, they often do not know their own processes, and their power sometimes dies away in manhood as a mere power of thinking hardly would do. The special powers in childhood of a majority of men of genius would, however, seem to be proved past question. E.B.

(To be continued.)

The Nine Hundred and Ninety-ninth Psalm.

O God, that I may see thee
As the pure in heart see thee.

O God, that I may hear thee
As thy true children can hear thee.

O God, that I may love thee
As thy well-beloved Son loved thee.

O God, that I may trust thee
As thy well-beloved Son trusted thee.

O God, that I may serve Thee
As the stars in their courses serve thee.

As the winds of heaven serve thee,
And the sun of heaven and the dew that distils from heaven.

O God, that thou mayest delight in me
As thou dost delight in the services of thy well-beloved sons and daughters.

O God, that I may serve thy children and bless them
As thou, their Father, dost bless and uplift them.

O God, thou art with me, and I am with thee.
Give me Life, and give it more abundantly.

There is a wider division of men than that into Christian and Pagan. Before we ask what a man worships, we have to ask whether he worships at all.—RUSKIN.

News from the Field.

It is impossible even to catalogue all the accounts that reach us of Sunday Sunday School Anniversary services held up and down the country during the past year, but it may be mentioned, without disparagement to other districts, Lancashire is specially to the front with her schools and collections. When Sunday School officers in other parts of the country read of collections of £66, £73, and £100, they think that Lancashire must be a veritable paradise for disheartened treasurers. Only when they remember that in most cases this is the whole income of the school, there being no subscription list in addition, the difference in total income is not so striking after all. An income of £70 supplied by a collection and an income of a similar amount supplied by a subscription list of £40 and a collection of £30, comes to about the same thing. The really remarkable thing about the Lancashire collections is the amount put in the plate by the scholars themselves. The writer remembers a Sunday morning collection which contained thirty half-sovereigns, and these, he was told, were contributed by members of the senior classes. Lancashire lads and lasses set a bright example to the rest of the country.

Garden Fêtes have been held at *Evesham*—for church expenses—and *Gee Cross*—for the East Cheshire Christian Union Bazaar, realising in each case about £50.

Presentations have been made at Reading to *Mr. A. A. Shrubsole*, in recognition of his services to the church; at Staleybridge, to the *Rev. W. Harrison*, by the Young Women's Class, on his retirement; at the George's Row Mission, to the *Rev. F. Sumners* and *Mrs. Sumners*, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of their work in London; at Unity Church, Islington, to *Mr.* and *Mrs. Hicks*, on the occasion of their wedding; at Chelmsford, to *Mr. J. H. Wray*, on his retirement, after 25 years' service from the office of treasurer; and at Flowery Field to the *Rev. W. L. Tucker*, on his leaving that sphere of labour to superintend the Blackfriars' Mission, London.

The beautiful window presented to the High Pavement Chapel, Nottingham, in memory of *P. W. Clayden*, is of more than local interest. Mr. Clayden was a man of many gifts, and whether as preacher or politician, as minister or journalist, he exercised in his day a wide and powerful influence for good. It is very appropriate that he should be commended in the church and town where his ministry was so remarkably successful.

It is with great regret we record the death, at Oldbury, of the *Rev. Henry McKean* in his sixty-ninth year. Mr. McKean succeeded his father as minister at Oldbury, and filled that position for forty-six years. He was a capable man of business, and in the local government of the district took a prominent place, having been the first chairman of the Urban Council. Mr. McKean was one of the first students of the Home Missionary College, entering just 50 years ago, at its foundation. He was one of the most familiar figures at the meetings of the Midland Christian Union, and his cheery presence will long be missed by his brother ministers.

In the death of *Mr. James Arlosh*, Manchester College loses one of its best benefactors. It was Mr. Arlosh who conceived the idea of reproducing Burne-Jones' "Days of Creation," in Morris glass, for the windows of the college, an idea most admirably carried out, and which led to the filling of the whole of the windows with designs by that great artist. Associated with the church at Carlyle, he presented the congregation with a suitable manse for its congregation. A man of simple and loveable character, his name will be faithfully remembered by many who had been helped both by his sympathy and his kindly gifts.

The event of the month in the history of our churches has been the Jubilee Commemoration of the founding of the Home Missionary College, Manchester. Whatever differences of opinion may have arisen, and still prevail, as to the raising of the £20,000 for the better accommodation and equipment of the college, everyone can join in offering hearty congratulations to its officers, students, and friends on the completion of its half-century of life and labour. That its former students should have subscribed out of their poverty the magnificent sum of £1000 speaks volumes for their grateful affection to their *Alma Mater*. Mr. Street's noble and eloquent sermon struck the right note for the occasion. It was a pity that one or two speakers must needs take the opportunity to flout other people, and the suggestion for a closer co-operation with the college at Oxford. Sooner or later that co-operation will have to come. Nothing can justify the present waste of resources. That the labours of six professors and four lecturers, with an expenditure of £6000, should this year recruit our ministry by only four new men, is not an arrangement that our business men can look on with any satisfaction.

We are glad to note the growth of confirmation services in our midst. On Sunday, July 3rd, at the Old Meeting Church, Birmingham, seventeen young people were received into fellowship after an impressive service conducted by *Mr. Wood*. A similar service was held on the same day at Norwich, where nine new members were welcomed into church-fellowship by the *Rev. Alfred Hall*. In both cases preparatory classes had been held by the respective ministers.

Guild News.

LONDON: MANSFORD-STREET GUILD.—A meeting of more than usual interest was held on Tuesday evening, July 12th, when a service of recognition, to welcome the entry of a number of young members, was joined in by the 37 friends present. The new members consisted of nine youths and six maidens, all scholars in the Sunday-school. In the course of an address the warden (Rev. J. Ellis) reminded his hearers that the Guild was intended to bind and strengthen them for service.

LONDON: STRATFORD.—The annual services in connection with the Young People's Guild were held on Sunday, July 17th. The morning service was conducted by the president of the Guild, the Rev. W. H. Rose, who spoke upon the need of seeing the world through the spiritual as well as the physical senses. The evening service was conducted by the Rev. F. K. Freeston, who spoke of the object of such a guild as being to develop the powers of dedication, service, and friendship.

The Midland Educational Company, Limited, Birmingham.